THE KUFIC COLLECTION
OF THE PRUSSIAN CONSUL WETZSTEIN

The 1100 Leaves of the Universitätsbibliothek in Tübingen
and their Importance for Palaeography and Qur’anic Criticism

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I. introduction.

From 1849 to 1861, the Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein held the position of first Prussian consul in Damascus.1 Wetzstein was a politician and a diplomat,2 as well as a scholar, whose correspondence still bears witness to his education and scientific activity. Among the senders of the letters received by Wetzstein, and now kept in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, were such scholars as Flügel, Derenbourg, Sprenger, Nöldeke and Goldziher.3 Throughout the twelve years of his consulate, Wetzstein demonstrated his enthusiasm for collecting by purchasing manuscripts to be sold in Europe. He sold two collections to the Berlin Library. The first, sold in 1852 for 3285 thalers,4 consisted of 193 pieces, and is known as the Bibliotheca Wetzsteiniana I. The second, sold in 1862 for 25,000 thalers, is the Bibliotheca Wetzsteiniana II, comprising some 1958 items.5 The Prussian consul acquired a substantial collection that had already been formed by the family of Kadhi Omar Effendi er-Rifai and sold it

1 HUHN, Wetzstein, pp. 3–4.
2 The important role of Wetzstein as consul has been highlighted in HUHN, Wetzstein (see also the review of the work in Hour, "Huhn").
3 HUHN, Nachlaß (in "Allgemeine Korrespondenz: A–Z", pp. 52 fol.).
4 The collection was described in 1851 by WETZSTEIN, "Handschriftenverzeichnung.
5 KÖCHLER, Wetzstein, p. 21.
to the *Universitätsbibliothek* in Leipzig in 1853. Finally, in 1864, a collection of manuscripts gathered and acquired by Wetzstein in barely three years (1860–1862) was sold as a single lot to the *Universitätsbibliothek* in Tübingen: this comprised 173 pieces, soon augmented by the addition of two items, MaVI 174 and MaVI 175. In a copy of the printed catalogue kept in Tübingen, one can read the descriptions of these items in some notes written in Wetzstein's own hand in 1866. The Prussian consul himself prepared the catalogue of the Tübingen collection, *Catalog arabischer Manuskripte in Damasascus gesammelt*, which was published in 1863. Two years later, in 1865, all of the manuscripts were illustrated in an issue of *Das Ausland*.10

Both the 1863 catalogue and *Das Ausland* underline the importance of a certain part of the collection: the Qur'anic manuscripts, numbers MaVI 147–173 in the catalogue. These Kufic parchments ('Kufische Pergamente'), containing about 1100 leaves, play a major role in palaeographical studies and Qur'anic criticism ('Im Interesse der Paläographie und Korankritik').

The concise description by Wetzstein in his 1863 catalogue was expanded by Max Weisweiler in his *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften*, where Section xiv presents the "Kufische Pergamente", i.e., items 144–168 which correspond to items 147–173 of Wetzstein's catalogue. In Weisweiler's catalogue, the collection of Kufic Qur'anic manuscripts is presented according to a list of descriptive elements, such as content, number of leaves, parchment size and text area, number of lines, script style and features, vocalization, diacritical marks, sūra heading, end verse marker, comparison with the facsimile reproductions by Moritz in his Arabic palaeography,11 material and binding.

The collection of Qur'anic parchments in Kufic script is made up of twenty-five items, containing a total of 1130 leaves, giving evidence of the written transmission of the Qur'ān at the beginnings of Islam. They cover a wide range of early Arabic scripts, the so-called Kufic scripts, thus following the successful definition given by Adler in his

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8. Weisweiler, Verzeichnis, pp. 120–127.

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11. The range of Arabic scripts covered by the Tübingen collection corresponds with the diversity of the collection described in Déroche, Abbāsid.
12. An example of hidden structure of the qur'ān is the mix of the Bibliothèque nationale (BnF) 328, recently released from restraints of the nineteenth-century binding (see Déroche, *Parsino-petropolitanus*, pp. 2 and 22).
14. The classification of the writing styles has been drawn from Déroche, *Abbasid* (i.e., ḫīṭṭāt script, the early Abbāsid scripts and the new style).
15. One of the manuscripts of the collection is mentioned among the ḫīṭṭāt fragments in Déroche, "Position", p. 14.
II. THE CODEX.

Material. All the manuscripts in the collection are written on parchment, except for the fragment MaVI 172, whose leaves are made of paper. A further exception is MaVI 147, consisting of 67 leaves. In this manuscript, folio 28 is made of paper which has been inserted between the parchment leaves, with the aim of filling a lacuna in the text (i.e., sūrā al-‘ākhirah from verse 17 to verse 44). The missing portion of text was probably written on a bifolium.

*UbT* Ma VI 147, f. 28a
Q.99:17-27

It is also noteworthy that in some codices significantly different thicknesses of parchment are used within the same manuscript (e.g. in MaVI 163-164).

Quires. The present physical condition of the bound quires and bindings of the collection permits their examination, since they are not masked by modern collated bindings. The Qur’ānic fragments of the

Universitätsbibliothek in Tübingen represent some of the most valuable surviving evidence in the field of studies regarding the composition of quires and the original structure of the codex at the beginning of Islam. As examples, I can mention the manuscript which appears to be the oldest one in the collection (MaVI 165) and the manuscript still featuring its wooden front cover (MaVI 171). As to MaVI 165, the 77 folios of the fragment contain a continuous sequence of the Qur’anic text (Q.17:17-30:57). Autopsy of the folios within the quires reveals the following: five quinions, namely ff. 1-10, 11-20, 30-39, 40-49, 68-77; one tercetion, namely ff. 40-45; one senion, namely ff. 56-67 and one quaternion + one singleton, namely ff. 21-26, 22-27, 24-28, 25-29 and the independent folio 23, added in the middle of the quaternion. Therefore its structure can be outlined as follows: 2 V (20), IV + 1 singleton (29), V (39), III (45), V (55), VI (67), V (77).

Regarding MaVI 171, the codex contains a consecutive sequence of text in the first 59 folios (from sūrā gāfūr, 40:70 to bi-smī lāhī at the beginning of sūrā al-‘ākhirah, 46). The last three singletons contain part of sūrā al-‘ākhirah; namely f. 61: Q.61:5-6; f. 60: Q.60:12-13; f. 62: Q.62:31-34.16 The codex consists of three quinions, namely ff. 1-10, 30-39 (two bifolium and six independent folios arranged symmetrically), 40-49 (four bifolium and two independent folios symmetrically arranged); one senion + one singleton, namely ff. 11-23; one tercetion, namely ff. 24-29 (two bifolium and two independent folios arranged symmetrically) and one tercetion + seven singletons not symmetrically arranged, namely ff. 30-72, the structure being: V (10), VI + 1 (23), III (29), V (40), III + 7 (62).

Even the modest fragments, consisting of a single bifolium or a few folios, preserve the old sewing holes or the thread. Almost all the items have been recently sewn back on a thin paper board, without hiding the traces of the original structure.

Binding. One of the manuscripts, MaVI 171, preserves the interesting vestiges of a codex covering, namely the front cover, although the back cover missing.17

16 There is a lacuna in the catalogue of Weisweiler. He mentions 33 leaves instead of 63. It has to be noted that folio 60 is turned upside down among the other folios.
17 Weisweiler did not mention this item in his work devoted to manuscript bindings in German libraries, as he has given only two examples kept in the Universitätsbibliothek in Tübingen (i.e. Ma VI 86 and 123), see Weisweiler, Bucheinband.
In fact what survives is the rigid element of the cover,\textsuperscript{18} the wooden board,\textsuperscript{19} which is covered with leather, whereas the inner cover is lined with parchment.\textsuperscript{20} This doublelure fragment of the board has been written with a script different from the style used in the manuscript itself. The script of MaVI 171 is the new Abbāsid style, whereas the fragment of the doublelure bears traces of an earlier script, written with a different ink, both on the verso and on the recto of the parchment. Furthermore, the headband in Coptic style should be noted.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{18} With regard to the types of bookbinding in the Arabic tradition, see Gacek, Vademecum, pp. 22-23 and Déroche, Codicology, pp. 253-310.

\textsuperscript{19} As underlined in Bosca-Pettersson, "Bookmaking," pp. 56-57, with regard to the wooden boards of some Coptic book-bindings, wood was more suitable for the housing of parchment leaves, shielding the vulnerable skins.

\textsuperscript{20} Box-books were commonly lined with parchment; see Déroche, Codicology, p. 271.

\textsuperscript{21} This item has to be added to the hitherto not well known materials that constitute evidence for the controversial origins of form and technique of Islamic bindings. See Déroche, Codicology, pp. 254 and foll.
Page layout. In this collection it is possible to find some examples of ruled guides, which inscribe the text in a rectangle, such as in MaVI 163-164. The marginal bounding lines have been ruled with a hard point for the justification of the block of text on the verso of f. 18, on f. 19 and on the recto of f. 23.

![Detail of the bounding lines](Uf1 Ma VI 163-164, f. 21a)

It can be argued that the use of these ruled guides is related to different copyists and their different styles of writing. In fact, MaVI 163-164 is made up of two sections; ff. 1-18, with leaves of very thick parchment, gathered in one quinion (ff.1-10) and one quaternion (ff. 11-18), whereas the second section (i.e. ff.19-24) is composed of six singletons made of a thinner parchment. Folios 1-18a have been written by one copyist in the early Abbâsid script, while the remainder (ff. 18b-24²³) have been written by a different scribe in the new style script.

²² See DÉROCHE, Codicology, pp. 159-160.

²³ The change of style of writing does not correspond to the change in the structure of quires, as the page is conceived as a double page: 1-18b does not fit 1-18a and 19a-24b does not fit 18b-24b.

III. THE KUR'ÂN TEXT: ITS FEATURES, SUBDIVISION AND ORGANIZATION.

Contents. The 1130 leaves in 'Kufic' script present a significant part of the Qur'ân text, from sūrah al-fātiḥah to sūrah al-baq'āq (Q.1-69), even if sometimes the text is fragmentary. The first sūrah appears in MaVI 151 and MaVI 150, written on the verso of the first folio, while the recto is left blank, as is typically found in the earliest musḥaf which still preserve sūrah al-fātiḥah.²⁴ The sūrah from 10 to 36 are those which have been written in the greatest number of manuscripts in the collection. On the other hand, sūrah 52-56 and 68-69 appear only in one manuscript. Sūrah 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 17 are the ones that have been transmitted in single folios and two leaves, in a fragmentary way.

Subdivision and organisation of the text. The text transmitted in the Tübingen collection features the typical ornamental elements of Qur'ân manuscripts. The ornamentation was often added at a later stage, subsequent to the original writing, with the aim of highlighting the structure of the text and its subdivisions, made for the reader who looks out for indicators through the Qur'ân. An example is the demarcation between two sūrah by leaving an entire line or part of a line unwritten. Sometimes these gaps were subsequently filled with the title of the following sūrah and/or the number of verses of which it was composed. For example, in MaVI 154, on f. 2b, line 17, a gap in the text was added in red ink to demarcate the beginning of sūrah al-qasas.²⁵

In MaVI 147, there are no unwritten lines for demarcation, nor are sūrah headings reported. Sometimes even in the same manuscript the blank demarcation lines appear apparently with no regular pattern, and are sometimes omitted. MaVI 164 contains 22 beginnings of surah in the continuous sequence of the Qur'ân text, running from sūrah al-tawbah to sūrah Luqman. The scribe has inserted an entire line of

²⁴ See, for instance, sūrah al-fātiḥah on the verso of f. 1 (the recto being blank) in DaM 01-25.1 (TÖMPLE, "Fugl", p. 30).

²⁵ Sūrah al-qasas has been introduced with verse 1 (الله) placed before the title. Also MaVI 150 bears in the sūrah headings some examples of other titles, some surah being known under more than one title. For example, on f.17b, before Q.40, commonly entitled sūrah gāfūr, and on f.12b, before Q.73, commonly entitled sūrah fūsilat, but also known under the title sūrah bā' Mūsa, "the prostration".
demarcation in just five occurrences (f. 28b, l. 1; f. 37b, l. 4; f. 84b, l. 3; f. 88a, l. 2 and f. 97a, l. 2). A decorative band divides all the sura, without any indication of the title and number of verses.

MaVI 165, probably the earliest fragment in the collection, reveals two different hands both in the writing and in the demarcations of the sura. The first hand A has closed the last line with a series of triangular clusters of three strokes, leaving the following line unwritten or enriching it with geometric and floral ornaments, in brown and red ink.

The later hand, B, which has added some emendations to the text, has covered the earlier decorative band in black ink, with the title of the sura and the number of its verses.

Regarding the indication of the end of a verse by a marker, the collection manifests a wide range of realizations similar to other contemporary manuscripts. For a group of verses in MaVI 163-164, there is just a sketch of the marker, which probably would have been decorated at a following stage of the work with coloured ink or gold.

Even the numbering of the verses, like the text and its subdivision, may be the object of revision and correction in a period later than the original writing. MaVI 165 represents an example of this re-editing.

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26 See, for instance, DÉROCQ, Abbasid, pp. 21-23, 25.

27 See another instance of additions and emendations attached to an earlier subdivision of the text in the Parisino-petropolitanus codex (DÉROCQ, Parisino-petropolitanus, pp. 47-50, 78-102).
The scripts. Manuscripts MaVI 147–173 have been labelled as the “Kufische Pergamente.” They include fragments belonging to ḫāṭiḥ script, early Ābbāsid script and the new style of the Ābbāsid tradition. However, an analysis and classification of all the scripts falls outside the scope of this brief description.

On the other hand, with regard to the classification of the writing of the manuscripts, MaVI 162 poses some fascinating and intriguing questions. In fact, on the same folio we can find two different writing styles executed by the same hand (B). The beginning of f.43b is written in early Ābbāsid script, while in the following lines the copyist inserted and alternated different shapes of a letter, in writing for example the alif.

We recall the classification and description of Dānūrī, Ābbāsid.
the Kufic collection of the Prussian consul. The use of diacritical points, although irregular, provides the means distinguishing different meanings of the same rasm. An example recurrent in MaVI 165 of a reading that escapes the contradiction of the mushaf is the variant of the pronoun ‘you’ instead of the standard ‘they.’ This is the pronoun referring to the recipients of the Qur’anic message, e.g., f. 491a, l. 2, هَلْ يَنكُونَنَّ أَنَّ ...، instead of the standard Q. 2:78:6, “did they not see that We gave them the night for rest, [and the day for light]?”. We could also mention synonyms that emerge from the text of MaVI 165 by a different punctuation of the standard rasm, e.g., f. 548a, l. 12, سَجُّدًا “your gubbah” a synecdoche for the standard سَجَّدْ “your pocket” in Q. 2:32: “put your hand inside your shirt.” Synonyms not only arise from different diacritical points, as in the above example, but MaVI 165 bears synonyms that are contradictory to the rasm of the Qur’an ‘Utnan (musafir li rasm musafir ‘Utnan), e.g., f. 544a, l. 12, the unwounded and unpointed سَجُدَ can be read “[He] will cause you to fall to [the place to which you will return]” instead of the standard سَجَّدَ in Q. 2:85, “[He] will bring you back [home].”

Another example of variant readings pertaining to semantics is the occurrence (e.g., f. 154a, l. 15) of the variant قَاتِلَا instead of the standard قَاتِلَا the obscure name of the holy valley in the long history of Moses. In as many as four manuscripts that I know of, the word is recorded as قَاتِلَا and the dual started breaking down and the case obliquis “tended to supersede the rectus and be used in every syntactic environment” (Blau, “Disappearance,” p. 85). The variants verified in the manuscript are evidence in the reconstruction of the disappearance of cases in Arabic.

34 See Khan, Papyri, pp. 50, 98 and 100, and the several instances quoted by Hopkins, Grammar, § 85.
35 The variant reading of Q. 2:78:6, “did you not see that We gave you the night for rest, and the day for light?”, is to be connected with the fact that “throughout the process of revelation the presence is maintained of the listeners, the Believers whereas the emergence of a community (i.e., “they”) reflects the process of canonisation (Neuworth, “Pre-Canonical”, l. pp. 27-28).
36 In fact this is the translation in A. Haleem, Qur’an. All the translated Qur’anic passages quoted in this article are from this translation.
37 See Fedeli, “Readings”.
38 UBT Ma VI 165, fol. 15a, l. 15, in addition to British Library (BL) Or. 2965, f. 50b, l. 23 (the script is extremely damaged); Dār al-Maḥfiẓat (DaM) 37 (scriptio superior), f. 8a, l. 9 and Birmingham, Manuscript 2, 1572, f. 2a, l. 23.
Therefore we have to take into particular account the authority of the qir'āʾāt of ʿAlī bin ʿUmar (died AH140/AD760) and Ḍalīḥāk (died 155/773 or 156/774), even without accepting it. The qir'āʾāt (i.e., ْما وَي َّي) "Moses! I am your Lord. Take off your shoes: you are in the sacred valley, traversing it / traverse it?" is reported in the following sources:

1. "إعراب القراءات التسع وقليها" by al-Ḥusayn bin Ahmad bin Ḥalāwayh (died 603/1207).39

2. "المحرر الوビジ في تفسير الكب اسم الميز" by ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq bin ʿAtīyya l-Andalusi (died 541/1147).40

3. "ابح المحض" by ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq bin ʿAtīyya l-Andalusi (died 745/1344).41

4. "البر الأحمر" by as-Samḥ al-Ḥalabi (died 756/1356).42

The variant reading ْما وَي َّي is established by four occurrences, which give body to a substantiated qir'āʾ. The exemplary occurrence of ْما وَي َّي in MaVI 165 represents the extreme interest and value of the entire collection of "Kufic parchments" in the field of Qur'ānic criticism, as mentioned by Wetzstein in 1863.

IV. LATER ADDITIONS IN THE WRITTEN TEXT AND OUTSIDE THE WRITTEN TEXT: CORRECTIONS AND USES OF THE QUR'ĀN.

Emendations to standardise the text. A manuscript copied at an early date is sometimes revised in a later period, both in the sense of emendation or correction of the earlier text copied by the scribe, and in the sense of restoration of a text worn by time or revised with the aim of adding more information regarding the reading of the text and its use. One of the substantial changes found in revised earlier manuscripts featured in the Tübingen collection is the emendation of the transcribed Qur'ānic content with the aim of standardising the text, compared to any error made by the copyist. Again, we can merely outline some examples observed in the collection, beginning with the above mentioned substantiated qir'āʾ. In MaVI 165, the different reading ْما وَي َّي has been amended, but in fact it is still easy to read the erased alif.43

The wide range of Arabic scripts used in the collection provide us with instances illustrating the different methods of deletion of a word or a group of words. These cancellations are outstanding evidence of the status of the written form of the Qur'ān at the beginning of its transmission. The first method of deleting a word is the erasure of the ink by peeling off and removing traces of ink and parchment. This method of erasure and the other recipes and procedures are described by Ibn Bādis in his work.44 MaVI 165 provides a large number of examples of this procedure of erasing the variants written by the copyist. Luckily sometimes the erasure was not complete, thus affording the ability to read the original word.

The other technique to delete a word is to draw a line above it.45 We can mention several instances of these transparent cancellations,

39 Abū Gaʿfar Muḥammad bin Ahmad bin Ṣaṭṭ, Ibn Ḥalāwayh al-Aṣbahānī (see Ibn Ḥalāwayh, Frais, pp. 3-4).
43 The word is erased in as many as three manuscripts, i.e., in the above mentioned UBT Ma VI 165, DaM 27 sup and Birmingham Mingana Collection 2, 1572.
44 LEVET, "Bookmaking", pp. 30-37.
which leave the original word recognizable.

In the above mentioned MaVI 147, we find the common habit of deleting one or some words, which are substituted by a later emender in the margin, e.g. in f. 33a. At ll. 11–14, the parchment bears the Qur'anic text Q.30:42–43:

جَعَلَ الْحَيَاةَ الْبَلْدَةَ عَلَى صَلَةٍ بَيْنَ الْيَوْمِ وَالْيَوْمِ ۚ إِنَّهُ الْكَيْلَامَةُ الْكَبَّارُ

Say, 'Travel through the earth, and see how He brings life into being; and He will bring the next life into being. God has power over all things.' [Prophet], stand firm in your devotion to the upright religion, before an (irresistible) Day comes (from God).

The variant words, which correspond with another Qur'anic sentence (Q.29:30), were cancelled by drawing a line above them and the standard text has been vertically written in the margin.

Another instance illustrating the method of amending an omission is in MaVI 147, f.10a. At l. 8, the verse Q.26:41 is a case of homoioteleuton and was omitted because its end is exactly like the end of the previous verse (Q.26:40). The verse omitted due to an eye-skip\(^{46}\) has been written horizontally in the margin.

It remains to be noted that the script used for these corrections added in MaVI 147 — and they are just few examples — does not correspond with the script used to fill the missing parchment between folios 27 and 28.

An anomaly verified when examining the structure of MaVI 147, has drawn my attention. The paper folio 28 is an interesting addition

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\(^{46}\) Moeller, Vocabulary, s.v. "saut du même au même"; Déroche, Codicology, p. 201; Gacek, "Taxonomy", p. 222.
due the revision of the text of the manuscript. Folio 27 ends at Q.29:17
(i.e., رَضِىَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ مَنْ دُمِرْتُمْ وَمَنْ نُهِبْتُمْ) and folio 29 starts at Q.29:44 (i.e., أُخَافِضُ وَالَّذِينَ أَمَرْتُهُمْ تَأَخَذُوا). The lacuna (Q.29:17-44), which presumably occupied two leaves, has been filled by an added paper folio, sewn onto the left margin of the verso of f. 27. At the beginning of f. 28a the style of writing is similar to the whole manuscript, while at a certain point the copyist has changed his style, making smaller letters and shrinking the distance between the lines, probably being aware of the fact that the single folio was not enough in order to fill the lacuna.

Among the corrections due to the revision work of the emendator, we find in the collection a few examples of re-tracing the faded ink, e.g., in MaVI 150, MaVI 151 and to some extent in MaVI 165.

By means of amendment techniques, the text has been standardised to the established version, although the concept of vulgata can be considered as utopian.\footnote{Reynolds, "Studies", pp. 2-3; Puh, "Utopie"}
Additions for the reader: The structure of the text and its subdivisions. Among the later additions we can mention those addressed to the reader, both in order to facilitate access to the text and its handling as well as reminding the reader to perform the säğda at a given verse of the Qur’an. Those notes are placed within the text (e.g., markers at the end of verses or group of verses, end or heading of a sūra, vocalization) and notes on the page margins, adjacent to the written text (e.g., the säğda).

Additions outside the text block: the usage of the book.

It remains to be noted that some elements attributed with a protective power have been added outside the text-block, which was copied at an early stage. For instance, in MaVI 165, in the left margin of f. 75b, a six-pointed star has been added next to the Qur’anic text at ll. 18-19 (i.e., sūra fātîr, Q.35:45):

ا و لو وَحَد ا نَّكَن يا صَسَي
ا ما تَرْكِ عَظِيم هَا مَن ذَا و

If God were to punish people [at once] for the wrong they have done, there would not be a single creature left on the surface of the earth.

This symbol,48 frequently found in amulets, has been added with the same black ink that the emendator used for his corrections to the manuscript.

Furthermore, the ornaments added later in MaVI 163-164 presum-

48 The six-pointed star, i.e., the seal of Solomon, is a common sign in talismans (e.g., Ruckheim, "Coupes", p. 35, and Porter, "Amulets"). Solomon, or the seal of Solomon, also occur frequently in Byzantine amulets, its earliest appearance being on gems dating back to the fifth century AD. The seal of Solomon continued to be involved in magical papyri during the sixth and seventh centuries; see Sper, "Byzantine amulets", pp. 35-36.

ably relate to the "science of talismans and amulets, which is based on the philosophical principle that the human being and nature are both subject to the influence of the spiritual spheres." After the manuscript was copied, some ornaments and words were appended to the Qur’anic text written on the double page f. 17b and 18a, i.e., Q.2:266:

[Wadam any of you like to have a garden of palm trees and vines, graced with flowing streams and all kinds of produce, which, when you are afflicted with old age and feeble offspring, is struck by a fiery whirlwind and burnt down?] In this way God makes His messages clear to you, so that you may reflect on them.

We can observe in the upper margin of f. 18a the basmalah, a common feature of talismans,50 and at the bottom of the folio a six-pointed star inscribed in a circle filled with dots. Another six-pointed star has been erased in the middle, whereas in f. 17b we can observe an eight-pointed star.51 At the bottom of f. 17b a single-handed tablet has been sketched. While in Qur’anic manuscripts we can observe some examples of decorative elements using the shape of tabula ansata, like in the Qur’an written and illuminated by ‘Ali ibn Hilal, called Ibn al-Bawwâb,52 the tablet sketched in MaVI 163-164 is not a marginal ornamental device,53 but presumably an element of an amulet, due to the existence of an order of perception between the viewer (i.e., the reader) and the object (the book).54

49 Lakhsani, "Magie", p. 100.
50 Canaan, "Talismans", pp. 73-74.
51 Early copies of the Qur’an feature the eight-pointed star pattern, showing close similarities with Coptic textiles. Dyer, "Codicology", p. 233. See examples of eight-pointed stars in talismans in Rahn, "Talismanique", pp. 133, 137-138.
52 As regards the additions that frame the written text in the manuscript of the Chester Beatty Library, see Grabar, "Mediation", pp. 72-73, and the reproduction of its two tabula ansata (f. 35b and f. 35v) in Lewis, "Splendours", Table 27 and 31.
54 The theory of intermediaries (i.e., the ornament as a mediator) is proposed in Grabar, "Mediation".
V. Conclusion.

Following Wetzstein's suggestion, "für das Alter solcher HS", each single item in the Kufic collection deserves individual thorough study, not only palaeographical and philological, but also codicological. In fact, the original bindings of the manuscripts can contribute valuable additional data for the codicological study of the mushaf. With reference to Qur'anic criticism, for instance, the above mentioned evidence of the variant reading ⁵⁴ ⁵⁴ instead of the standard ⁵⁴ ⁵⁴, substantiated by its occurrence in three other manuscripts, opens new perspectives for studying a variant in the context of qira'at, since it cannot be considered the lapsus of a single copyist.

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THE COPENHAGEN MANUSCRIPT OF THE MAQĀMĀT AL-ḤARIRĪYYA

ADAM GACEK

INTRODUCTION

Among a number of interesting items listed in the recently published Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts by the Danish Royal Library (Det Kongelige Bibliotek), Copenhagen, there is a fascinating copy of the Maqāmāt al-Ḥarirīyya calligraphed, illuminated and glossed by the illustrious Mamluk litterateur Salāḥ ad-Dir Bahā ibn Aybak as-Ṣafādī (966-764/1557-1646). This MS was purchased by the Royal Library on July 11, 1972 at a Sotheby’s auction for £350.

The Maqāmāt were composed by al-Ṭāhir ibn ‘Ali l-Ḥarīrī (d.516/1122), whose full name is given on the illuminated title page (fol. 5a) as Tāḥ ad-dababī’ Abū Muhammad al-Ṭāhir ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Ali l-Ḥarīrī. The text consists of 50 maqāmāt (‘assemblies’ or ‘sessions’); the first one begins on fol. 7b and the last on fol. 149b.

Salāḥ ad-Dir as-Ṣafādī was not only a very prolific author but also a copyst of many works either needed for his research or produced for patrons. It is said that he copied some 500 works himself. Many of his own books written in his hand (whether drafts or fair copies) have

1 MS Cod. Arab. Add. 83. For a short description see Irmeli PERKO, Catalogue of Arab manuscripts (Copenhagen: NIAS, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, 2007), vol. 9, pp. 1446-1451. Recently digitized, this MS can be viewed on the Royal Library’s website www.db.dk/manuscripts/2009/okt/oriental addressing the author assistance with access to this manuscript.
2 See C. BROCKELMANN, Geschichte der arabischen Literatur, 1, p. 396; SL, p. 486.